

REMARKS

Receipt of the Office Action of May 24, 2006 is gratefully acknowledged.

Claims 8 - 15 have been examined. These have been finally rejected as unpatentable under 35 USC 103(a) over Grube et al in view of Kail, IV.

This final rejection is respectfully traversed.

Field devices typically have sensors (for example, a flow or level or pressure sensor) and a so-called transmitter. Usually the transmitter has a housing in which all the sensitive electronic components for controlling the field device are located. These electronic components are quite sensitive to environmental influences. Therefore, they have to be protected from the medium and the probably damaging environmental atmosphere. The electronics in the transmitter, especially, should be protected from humidity which may condense in the housing of the transmitter under certain environmental conditions. Condensing humidity in the housing of the transmitter may be dangerous as it increases the risk that the electronic parts in the transmitter would be damaged and probably the field device destroyed.

The present invention provides the state of the art with a solution to this problem regarding a "predictive maintenance" function of the field device, by detecting the appearance of a damaging process parameter before it leads to a failure of the field device.

The newly cited art most assuredly do not suggest a "Predictive Maintenance" measure. Couple this fact with the further fact that they do not refer to a field device in process automation. The Grube et al patent refers to a method and an apparatus for monitoring processing environmental conditions within a wireless communication system. This has nothing to do with the present invention. Kail IV describes an automated, real-time, reprogrammable monitoring and control system for portable, remote sensors and subjects. Each of the portable monitoring units has a sensor, a location-determining device (GPS), and a sensor interface unit. The portable unit is carried or worn by a person or animal, or fixed to an inanimate subject.

The present invention and the two newly cited patents are clearly different, and

U.S. Pat. Appl. 10/815,939

to insure that this difference is recited in the claims, claim 8 has been amended to recite that the field device has not only a sensor but a transmitter and that the transmitter is mounted on the sensor. This amendment lends a further structural difference over the inventions disclosed in the newly cited patents.

In particular, note again what has been stated above regarding the Predictive Maintenance function according to the present invention of which the two newly cited patents are absolutely silent.

The examiner is urged to enter the above noted amendment to claim 8, since it does not present anything new to the prosecution, and find claims 8 - 15 allowable. Alternatively, entry of the above amendment for purposes of appeal is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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